

36 Bullough Park
Newton, MA 02160
October 28, 1987

Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm
President
Yeshiva University
500 West 185th Street
New York, NY 10033

Dear Dr. Lamm.

As a member of the Massachusetts delegation you addressed yesterday (and as a YU graduate), I want to thank you for the splendid presentation you gave our group. I assure you that it was as effective as it was forthright and articulate.

At our closing session Monday evening, one Conservative and Reform participant after another rose to declare that your speech was the trip's highlight. Said one woman, "Rabbi Lamm was an epiphany." (sic!!)

All of us marveled at how clearly superior YU's efforts were to those of the other seminaries. Everyone likes to be taken seriously, and no one could miss the intensity with which you and your colleagues took seriously and in fact shared the goal of our mission: to promote Jewish unity. I have to tell you that as a YU alumnus, I was enormously proud.

The result? Reform and Conservative participants were shocked into recognizing how distorted their stereotypes of Orthodox Jews were. (Perhaps we Orthodox members of the group helped a little, too.)

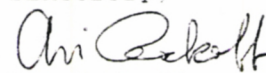
But more important: the ideals by which we live commanded new respect by being set forth clearly and without apology. (For example, discussing "patrilineal descent," one Reform woman shook her head and said, "But I thought the Orthodox opposed it just because they wanted to have it their way and not ours. I didn't know there was a law involved.") Our group were concerned balebatim, not radical ideologues: faced with an explanation of halacha, they wanted not to reject it, but to learn more about it.

I am sure, Dr. Lamm, that you hoped to accomplish these things, and I just wanted to let you know that, at least as far as this particular group was concerned, you succeeded.

Next, of course, you have to host a Unity delegation from Agudas Yisroel and the Chassidim of Munkacs...

Meanwhile, we will do our best in Boston to have our leaders follow your example. Once again, thank you.

Sincerely,


Avi Rockoff

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